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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. At its 49th meeting, on 14 December 1999, the Second Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73 by consensus. A statement of programme budget implications was before the Committee in document A/C.2/54/L.74.

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

2. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 13, 14 and 16 of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, the General Assembly would:

(a) Recall that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will convene in 2001, welcome the offer of the European Union to host the conference in Brussels, decide to accept the offer [para. 1];

(b) Decide that the meeting of the intergovernmental preparatory committee envisaged in paragraph 4 of its resolution 53/182 will be organized in New York in two parts, in the third quarter of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001, each for five working days [para. 2];

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(c) Request the Secretary-General of the Conference to organize regional-level preparatory events in collaboration with the regional commissions and other relevant regional and subregional organizations, as appropriate [para. 3];

(d) Request the Secretary-General, with the assistance of concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to take the necessary measures to intensify their public information efforts and other appropriate initiatives to enhance public awareness in favour of the Conference, including by highlighting its objectives and its significance [para. 13];

(e) Decide to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee and the Conference itself through the use of extrabudgetary resources, and in the event that those resources prove to be insufficient, request the Secretary-General to consider all other options, including, *inter alia*, the use of unspent balances from the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997, as an exceptional measure [para. 14];

(f) Request the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Member States, to make necessary arrangements, through redeployment and the use of other resources at their disposal, for the substantial strengthening of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries through the provision of sufficient staff and necessary resources, with a view to enabling it to organize effectively and efficiently the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the follow-up to its outcome, while satisfactorily carrying out its mandates relating to the least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries [para. 16].

B. Relationship of the proposed activities to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

3. The activities arising from those paragraphs of the draft resolution relate to programme 9, Trade and development, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, in particular subprogramme 5, Least developed, landlocked and island developing countries (A/53/6/Rev.1) and to the programme of work included under section 11A, Trade and development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/6/Rev.1, vol. II), with particular reference to the same subprogramme 5. Activities arising from paragraph 13 are related to programme 23, Public information, of the medium-term plan and section 26, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

4. In accordance with the outcome of the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the least developed countries constitute a cross-sectoral issue in the work of UNCTAD, and sectoral issues are dealt with by the divisions of UNCTAD within their respective mandates. Subprogramme 5 also seeks to involve the full mobilization and coordination of all relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system in support of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

C. Additional requirements

5. **Paragraph 1**. It is recalled that under the established headquarters principle, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would be held at Geneva. It is therefore understood, in accordance with section I, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, that any additional costs resulting from a change of the Conference from Geneva to Brussels would be borne by the host country or, in this particular instance, the European Union.

6. **Paragraph 2**. The holding of the meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee in New York would constitute an exception to section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, in which it is stipulated that United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters, which in this case is Geneva. Furthermore, it is to be understood that the exact timing of the two meetings of the preparatory committee in the biennium 2000-2001 would be determined taking into account the availability of conference facilities and services and the overall calendar of meetings for the biennium in New York.

7. The meetings of the intergovernmental preparatory committee in New York would entail additional requirements for travel of staff from Geneva to New York to provide substantive services to the preparatory committee as follows:

Ten staff for each session (travel: $500 each; daily subsistence allowance: two Ds: $2,200 each, and 8 others: $1,925 each, and terminal expenses per person $108): $50,000

8. **Paragraph 4**. It is proposed to organize two regional-level preparatory events, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, respectively, at the time of the regular annual sessions of each Commission. The additional requirements relate to travel of three staff members to each meeting to organize and provide substantive servicing to these preparatory events and miscellaneous expenses as follows:

Three staff for each meeting (travel: $2,400 average; daily subsistence allowance: $150 per day for five days, including travel time; and terminal expenses: $108): $20,000
Miscellaneous expenses ($2,500 per meeting): $5,000

9. **Paragraph 13**. It should be noted that a provision of $163,600 is proposed for information activities in connection with the Conference, under section 26, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (see A/54/6/Rev.1, vol. III, para. 26.140). These resources relate to the coverage of the Conference itself. In order to enhance public awareness of the Conference it is proposed to provide an additional amount of $30,000 which would be used for dissemination of information on the Conference and its outcome in local languages.

10. **Paragraph 14**. The cost of the participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the two preparatory committee meetings and the Conference itself would be met from extrabudgetary resources. The requirements are estimated to amount to $1,164,500 for the meetings of the preparatory committee and $500,500 for the Conference. Should the extrabudgetary resources be insufficient, it is the understanding of the Secretary-General that he would be authorized to use in the first instance the remaining portion of the resources approved by the General Assembly in paragraph 2 of its resolution 53/3 for the one-time funding of the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the commissions of the Trade and

Development Board. As indicated in paragraph 16 of the annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the activities financed from the unspent balance from the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/54/501), total expenditures as at 30 September 1999 for the financing of experts amounted to $511,300, as against the original allocation of $1,088,000. The available balance would be $576,700. This amount would be sufficient to cover the cost of participation (travel, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses) of two representatives from all least developed countries to the first meeting of the preparatory committee in 2000. Should there continue to be a shortfall in the availability of extrabudgetary resources for the participation of those representatives in the second meeting of the preparatory committee and the Conference itself, in 2001, the Secretary-General would bring that situation to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session for appropriate action.

11. The payment of travel to representatives of least developed countries as envisaged in paragraph 14 of the draft resolution would imply an exception to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962, regarding the payment, out of United Nations funds, of travel and subsistence expenses to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations.

12. **Paragraph 16**. The proposals of the Secretary-General regarding the programme of work of UNCTAD for the biennium 2000-2001, and the related resources to carry out that programme of work, including the preparations and the holding of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, are contained in sections 11A and 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, which is currently under consideration by the General Assembly. Within the level of resources proposed in the programme budget for that biennium, it is not possible, at this stage, to identify resources which could be redeployed to substantially strengthen the Office of the Special Coordinator as requested in paragraph 16 of the draft resolution. In order to implement the request in that paragraph it is proposed to provide the Office of the Special Coordinator with 48 work months of general temporary assistance equivalent to one P-5, one P-4 and 2 P-3 level posts. The related resource requirements are estimated at $541,400. These resources would provide the Office of the Special Coordinator with additional capabilities to coordinate United Nations system-wide preparations for the Conference, including coordination with the regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; to assist and support country-level preparations for the Conference; to provide advisory services to least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; to support the preparation of sectoral thematic reports and substantive inputs for the Conference; to carry out research in support of country- and regional-level preparations for least developed countries; and to liaise with civil society and entities including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, media and academia in preparation for the Conference.

13. The table provides a summary of the additional requirements referred to above.

Paragraph	General temporary assistance	Travel of staff	Public information	Miscellaneous	Total
2		50.0			50.0
4		20.0		5.0	25.0
13			30.0		30.0
16	541.4				541.4
Total	**541.4**	**70.0**	**30.0**	**5.0**	**646.4**

D. Potential for absorption

14. No provision was included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for the above-mentioned additional requirements.

E. Contingency fund

15. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred to a later biennium.

16. No activities could be identified, at this stage, for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification under section 11A, Trade and development, and section 26, Public information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 to accommodate the additional requirements of $646,400 referred to in the table above.

17. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, additional provisions would be required over and above the resources included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, as follows: $616,400 under section 11A and $30,000 under section 26. These provisions would represent a charge against the contingency fund and as such would require a related additional appropriation.